

Transforming International Power Structure: A Reciprocal Analysis of China's Peripheral Diplomacy and South Asian Security Dilemma

Muhammad Imran¹, Dr.Fasiha Altaf², Dr.Muhammad Adnan Maqbool³, Muhammad Umair Ashraf⁴, Uzma Niaz⁵, Dr.Gulnaz Akbar⁶, Dr. Shahid Kalim Khan⁷, Fariha Sohail⁸

Abstract

The rise of China is the most contentious debate of the current century. Beijing has become more audacious in global politics. President Xi introduced a new diplomacy of periphery according to which restoration and sustenance of peace in China's neighbourhood is conducive to peaceful rise of China. South Asia is the vital periphery of China and the most militarized zone on the earth where Kashmir issue is the flashpoint of nuclear escalation. It is the most decisive region in Chinese periphery in which 'terror-stricken' Pakistan and 'assertive' India are competing over arm race. China's interests in South Asian periphery are broad. This paper critically analyses the China's peripheral diplomacy and South Asian security dilemma simultaneously. This paper argues that South Asian security dilemma is the rate determining factor of China's growth. Moreover, ongoing Sino-US competition hinders the peripheral diplomacy to effectively overcome the issue of India Pakistan distrust and Afghan conundrum. Despite all soft ambitions, China's peripheral diplomacy is severely contingent upon the Indo-Pak security dilemma which can exacerbate the security dynamic of China at any stage. This work is divided into three main sections. First section discusses the peripheral diplomacy of China and the proportion of South Asia in that diplomacy. Second section critiques the involvement of China in South Asia. Third section is devoted to a rigorous analytical discussion on the prospects of China's peripheral diplomacy in South Asia.

Keywords: rise of China, security dilemma, power politics, South Asia, peripheral diplomacy

Introduction

The end of cold war had brought rapid and unanticipated changes in the arena of global politics. This paradigm shift had not only influenced the international setting but also brought forth a theoretical gap to understand the newly emerged unipolar world. Various scholars criticized the inadequacy of prevailing theories and tried to redefine the altered order of the world (Liu, 2010).

¹ Assistant professor, Department of political science, Emerson University Multan, Pakistan

² Assistant Professor, Department of Education, GC Women University Sialkot, Pakistan

³ Assistant Professor (Education), University of Education Lahore

⁴ Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, GC Women University, Sialkot, Pakistan

⁵ Assistant professor, Department of Sociology, The Women University Multan

⁶ Lecturer, Department of Education, GC Women University Sialkot, Pakistan

⁷ Assistant Professor, Department of Business Administration, Thal University Bhakkar

⁸ Corresponding Author : Assistant Professor, Department of Education, The Women University Multan, Pakistan

Although the US is still a preeminent actor in the world politics, but it has failed in sustaining its predominant status in the international system. One can easily comprehend the continuous transformation in the world order through the prism of Zakaria's "rise of the rest". It states that in the contemporary global setting whilst America is not declining but the "rest" is rising. Zakaria included several autocratic and democratic states in the "rest" which can compete the USA in terms of economy and defence (Zakaria, 2008).

In this manner, China is the veritable competitor of the US. The phenomenal economic growth of China was heightened after the financial crisis of 2008 which eroded the predominance of the west (Buzan, 2010). The economic growth coupled with military capabilities has made it a formidable strategic entity. The important feature of China's economic planning is that China does not ignore its contagious region while improving its economy and security. This is what broadly known as China's peripheral diplomacy aimed at increasing the sphere of influence in its periphery. South Asia is an inevitable periphery of China and a significant regulator of its phenomenal rise. South Asia is one of the most militarized zones of the globe where two nuclear rivals are competing over arm race and Kashmir dispute. This situation has traumatized the prospects of economic prosperity of South Asia. This work aims to develop a framework to investigate the prospects of the China's peripheral diplomacy in precarious arena of South Asia.

China's Security Strategy and Peripheral Diplomacy

The ultimate goal of China's security strategy is to curb the internal and external threats to its territory and materialize the revitalization of Chinese nation. Peripheral diplomacy remained a crucial aspect of China's national security strategy (Bhattacharya, 2016). The policies formulated by the Chinese leadership such as 'Lean to One Side', 'Good Neighbour Policy', 'Western Development Strategy', 'Multilateralism', 'Peaceful Rise and Harmonious Development' and currently the 'Belt and Road Initiative', all indicate the persistence of periphery as a prominent element in China's domestic and foreign policies (Bhattacharya, 2016).

The concept of periphery was first inoculated officially in 2002. Then, China had been following a limited and conservative approach to international affairs. However, president Xi has adopted an assertive behaviour in foreign policy. President Xi has abandoned the traditional low-file approach and challenged the status quo of the Asia Pacific order. He laid much emphasis on increasing the sphere of influence in peripheral countries. Periphery is not only limited to China's immediate neighbours, but those regions are also included which impinged on its national security. Thus, periphery encompasses three basic perspectives. (Kaura, 2018) Firstly, it serves as a sphere for safeguarding the China's national security, territorial integrity and sovereignty. Secondly, it is related to the sustainable economic development of China. Thirdly, the stable periphery is an indispensable ingredient for the sustained revitalization of Chinese nation. Therefore, China is attempting to shape a favourable international environment which will be conducive to its dominance. In pursuit of interacting with rest of the world, China has joined multilateral international institutions at global level to increment its economic development which is otherwise impossible. Now the situation has reached this point that any global institution will be handicapped without Chinese inclusion.

Beyond, increasing the sphere of influence, China's security framework also tries to protect its national security, territorial integrity and sovereignty. China defence policy also focuses on transnational security threats beyond its immediate periphery. These threats include menaces of terrorism, separatism and extremism which are mostly regarded as the three evils by Chinese officials. President Xi foreign policy has three main frameworks i.e., improved bilateral relations with

neighbours, counter the menaces of three evils and competing the global powers especially in Asia Pacific.(Bhattacharya, 2016)

Proportion of South Asia in China's Diplomacy

China gave third priority to South Asia after Northeast and Southeast Asia prior to tragic incidence of 9/11. In that era, main focus of China in South Asia was to counter India and both states fought war in 1962 over border issues. China has resolved its boundary disputes with Pakistan and Nepal but the disputes with India and Bhutan over boundary demarcations are yet to be addressed. Pakistan-China relations are still underpinned by an idea of shared rivalry against India. It is generally believed that China and Pakistan are enough to deter the regional hegemony of India. Some events like nuclearization of South Asia, US intervention in Afghanistan and emergence of mega wave of terrorism in the region and the subsequent event of Indo-US nuclear deal compelled China to revisit its policy towards South Asia.

South Asia is serving as an important strategic ground for the Sino-US competition for gaining strategic depth in Indian Ocean and Central Asia. Now, South Asia is equally important to China as East Asia and South China Sea. The importance of South Asia can be manifested by the fact that two of the six corridors of Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) namely China–Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar (BCIM) Economic Corridor passes through the South Asia. China's interests in South Asia are mainly due to the fact that it provides feasible land route to Indian Ocean at the chokepoints of Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf without any interference by the USA and Indian watchdogs. The broad objective of China in South Asia is to promote multidimensional economic, diplomatic and security cooperation in the region.

Security Dynamics of South Asia

There are three valuable factors which explain the regional security dynamic of South Asia. These factors include regional diversity and multiethnicity, structural asymmetry and India's big brother syndrome. Security dilemma is an obscure term. According to Tang (2009), Security Dilemma arises in anarchic situation between two defensive realist states. The defensive measures by one state are perceived as offensive postures by its counterpart and vice versa. Consequently, both states tend to pile up more power. However, the defensive measure and countermeasures don't reduce the security risks but reinforce the concerns and doubts about each other's intentions. In this way, both states involve themselves into a vicious cycle of accumulating power which leads them to unnecessary outcomes i.e., war or threats of war.(Tang, 2009)

Indo-Pak rivalry in the South Asian region is the precise manifestation of security dilemma. The ambience of mistrust and fear has been engulfing the whole region since the inception of India and Pakistan. Kashmir is the root cause of all conflicts, and the tension has further exacerbated after the overt nuclearization of India and Pakistan. Despite major wars of 1965 and 1971, there were overall five nuclear tinged emergencies between India and Pakistan after the nuclearization of India in 1974 and Pakistan 1998. These crises were either preceded by any aspirational diplomatic approach or succeeded by futile diplomatic overtures. Kargil war (1999) and Twin Peak Crisis (2001-02) were most grievous in terms of nuclear escalation followed by Brasstacks Crisis (1986-87), Compound Crisis (1990) and the Mumbai attack Crisis of 2008.

China in South Asia

Enthusiastic Relations with Pakistan and Pak-China Nexus

In South Asia, China's most common friend is Pakistan, and their bilateral relations are formally cited as "higher than Himalayas and deeper than Ocean". The major stimulants behind their cordial relations are their common apprehensions in regional and global politics. Pakistan considers India as its old rival and the USA as swindler ally. While China's hostile relations the USA are obvious, and China didn't try to develop relations with India at the cost of Pakistan. Both nations depend upon each other to achieve their strategic and security goals. China has assisted Pakistan to strengthen its military capabilities and nuclear arsenals. China has a pivotal role in building confidence of Pakistan and previously supplied arms to Pakistan as much as America (Paul, 2003). In current decade, China has furnished 63 percent of arms needs of Pakistan thus lagging the America whose shares were only 19 percent during 2010 to 2015.

The western region of China is lagging in economic development to a greater extent as compared to its eastern side. The menaces of terrorism, extremism and separatism are widely present in this region. Pakistan has central importance for China in reducing these menaces by economic upgradation of Xinjiang province and connecting it to Indian Ocean.

China supported Pakistan at various international forums like Nuclear Suppliers Group, United Nations Security Council, and the G-20 etc. Although China adopted a neutral policy over Kashmir issue, but Indian reluctance to resolve border disputes with China and its subsequent tendencies towards America has boosted the entente cordiale of Pakistan and China.

China-Pak nexus is necessary to curtail Indian hegemony in South Asia and balance the Indo-US defence and nuclear partnership which is vigorously contributing to India's arrogant attitude in the region. Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship, Peace and Cooperation of 1971 and Indo-US nuclear deal of 2008 added strength to Sino-Pak ties. Indo-US nuclear deal was against the norms of Non-Proliferation Treaty and rules of NSG group (Nuclear Supplier Group). In the wake of this deal China became the largest nuclear supplier to Pakistan. China provided three nuclear reactors of 330 MW at Chashma Nuclear Power Plant to complement the already two working reactors. Up to now, China has worked on 6 nuclear reactors in Pakistan with the total capacity of 3.4 million kilowatts. Recently, China National Nuclear Corporation (CNNC) and the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) have ratified another agreement to build a third HPR1000 reactor of one million-kilowatt capacity in Pakistan. All these reactors are under the safeguards of International Atomic Energy Agency but also criticized for violation of NSG norms and considered as threat to regional stability.

China provided enough military and economic aid to Pakistan to stamp down the terrorist networks in tribal and provincially administered areas of Pakistan which were also a source of trouble for China in Xinjiang. Naval forces of Pakistan and China have been conducting joint maritime search and rescue exercises since 2003 to secure their sea lanes. Pakistan Navy initiate a defence deal of \$600 million with China and according to this deal Pakistan would also provide four F-22P frigates. (Makhdoom et al., 2014)

Historically, the Pak-China relations were imbued with militarism, but with the development of the CPEC, there is a hope of economic oriented relations which will focus on trade and energy security. The landmark investment of China in Pakistan includes CPEC and development of Karakoram highway and Gwadar port. Gwadar port is supposed to be the part of Chinese 'String of Pearls Strategy' and regarded as a milestone in Sino-Pak strategic and military cooperation. It is located at the mouth Gulf of Oman and Strait of Hormuz from where India import 63 percent of its oil. By this, Pakistan and China can easily monitor the hegemonic and expansionist strategies of India and the US in Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea as well Persian Gulf.

The CPEC is a pivotal extension of Chinese 21st Century Silk Road Initiative. It will further strengthen the economic, political and defensive ties between Pakistan and China. Pakistan can partially counter the hegemon of India in regional economy by the CPEC. This megaproject will guarantee the prosperity of least developed and conflicted areas of both China and Pakistan.

Rising extremism and instability in Pakistan in the recent years has created lots of concerns for China due to its long-term impacts for the nation in general and for Pak-China economic ventures in particular. On the other hand, Pakistan addressed the concerns of China on priority basis and started a crackdown against the extremist groups in North Waziristan who were involved in targeting China directly or have connections with such groups like East Turkistan Islamic Movement / Turkistan Islamic Party.

Afghanistan Conundrum and China's Role

Historically, Afghanistan always remained a bone of contention among major powers. Regional countries also attempt to acquire 'strategic depth' in Afghanistan. China shares a very small border with Afghanistan, but it has always shown its enthusiasm to bring stability in Afghanistan. Instable Afghanistan has a very negative implication for China's dream of economic expansion. Moreover, China is also concerned about Taliban influenced extremism and separatism in its Afghanistan bordering Xinjiang province. China has friendly ties with Afghanistan and invested much in the country and refrained itself from directly involving in US-led war on terrorism on Afghanistan territory.

There have aroused various factors in Afghanistan which have negative impact on strategic interests of China in the region. The most important factor is that Afghanistan has become the safe hideout of Uighur militant outfits. The insurgency in Xinjiang and separatist tendencies in Uighur community is offshoot of Islamic extremism in Afghanistan and economic marginalization by China.

The militancy in Afghanistan has a spill over effects on China as well Pakistan and Central Asia which are the breeding ground of Chinese economic expansion. Instability in Afghanistan is enough to bottle up the likely benefits of China's multibillion projects. The trade route of the CPEC in Pakistan mostly moves along the borders of Afghanistan. Moreover, the ultimate destination of CPEC in China is Xinjiang which is again vulnerable to Afghanistan influenced militancy and separatism. The broad interests of Chinese officials in Afghanistan are to minimize the instability and militancy in Afghanistan which is potentially hitting the ambitions of China.

China is more actively involving in Afghanistan as the US is losing ground in Afghanistan. China is prevailing in Afghanistan as a soft power, thus letting down India's legitimate effort to maintain its hegemony over region. India has also extended its soft image in Afghanistan in order to gain foothold in Afghanistan which is necessary for its 'Connect Central Asia Policy' and to counter Pakistan. However, India may not prevail in Afghanistan in the presence of another and relatively stronger economic hegemon. India and China are going to play a waiting game in Afghanistan, but China's soft power is enough to procrastinate the India's determinations to maintain hegemony over Afghanistan and beyond. A secure and stable Afghanistan will have a positive effect on twitchy Xinjiang province which is jugular vein of China's economic security. China has shown its willingness to reconcile Taliban headship with Kabul administration which is necessary for regional peace and security. (Basit & Shahid, 2016)

Convergence and Divergence of interest between India and China

India and China share a long history of complicated and strife relations. Both states are rising economic powers and their trade of natural resources is delicate and facing heightened insecurity. Both countries are expanding their space and naval technologies to maintain a broad range of

influence over South Asia. China is continuously impugning the autonomy of India over Arunachal Pradesh and Kashmir. Pakistan is major source of foe between India and China. China assists Pakistan to take control over South Asia and Indian Ocean which displeases India. Moreover, India is feared about being encircled by China. (M. Khan & Kasi, 2017).

China's attempts to cooperate with Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Maldives and develop ports in these countries which are vicinal to India has exacerbated the Indian fear of encirclement. However, encircling India in South Asia is not the predominant and sole objective of China. China's interest in India lies in reducing border tensions with India and ingrained security rivalry along with maintenance of stable economic relations. China also wants to cooperate with India beyond its strategic backyard and the points of convergence where the interests of both countries meet in global affairs.

China's policy in South Asia is primarily India centric. The key objective of China's policy in Asia is to counter the emergence of an equal competitor in Asia Pacific. America endorses India to challenge China's status of sole "Middle Kingdom" in Asia Pacific. Meanwhile, China focuses on arming the neighbours of India to make India weak. It is estimated that smaller nations which border India got most military arsenals from China and 90 percent of Chinese arms trade goes to the nations which are contiguous to India. (Malik, 2001) South Asian states consider India as fish in troubled water and attempt to destabilise India to insulate their regional integrity. South Asian states have resentments against Indian version of "Monroe Doctrine" which disregards the South Asian right to develop security ties with external powers and asserts its sole right over Indian Ocean. In the pursuit of this doctrine, India enforces South Asian nations, having maritime boundaries, not to invite or cooperate with external powers in Indian Ocean. However, China has decisively demolished this doctrine and proved that it was a pointless exercise of India to extend its control over Indian Ocean. China has developed a military base in Indian Ocean near the horn of Africa and Gwadar Port in Pakistan while the maritime silk route encompasses the whole Indian Ocean.

Momentous Inclusion of Pakistan and India to Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)

SCO is a multi-dimensional organization concerning with the politics, security and economics of Eurasian region. It is an important element of China's peripheral diplomacy because the member states of this organization are located in the periphery of China. Pakistan and India, which were initially admitted as observer states in 2005, have gotten full membership of the SCO in 2017. SCO provides another platform (except SSARC) to India and Pakistan to solve their disputes bilaterally through the mediation of China and Russia. It is speculated that by adding India and Pakistan as member states in SCO, China is trying to secure its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) because these two countries are capable enough to blow up this project.

Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) in South Asia

The idea of BRI was given by president Xi Jinping in 2013. The aim of this initiative was to bring economic integration throughout the Eurasian region by building a vast network of roads extending through the China's periphery to West Asia and Horn of Africa. The action plan authorised by State Council in 2015 has two components i.e., economic belts and maritime silk routes. This initiative will benefit around 68 countries which have shown keen interests in this initiative. China will invest more than \$3 trillion during the upcoming decades on infrastructure development of these countries. (Chawla, 2017)

China is currently working on two major trade route projects in South Asia namely Kunming-Chittagong trade route and Gwadar-Xingjian trade route which are parts of mighty Belt and Road Initiative. China, by these projects, will play a crucial role in economic integration of the South Asian

region. The proposed routes will not only unfetter south-western region of China from geographical constraints but also ensures the economic development of underdeveloped South Asian countries.

Kunming-Chittagong route passes through India, Bangladesh and Myanmar to China by which other South Asian nations can also import and exports. The subregion of Asia which is going to be profited by this project is termed as the BCIM subregion (Bangladesh, China, India and Myanmar) which constitutes two fifth of the world inhabitants.(Javaid, 2016)

The other proposed economic route is Gwadar Xinjiang Route which is commonly known as China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), will directly benefit Pakistan, Afghanistan, far-western China and Central Asia. India can also join this route to access Central Asian market. The CPEC potentially can deepen the economic relations of Pakistan and China and can be proved beneficial for public of both nations. Moreover, the CPEC also has ability to alter the geopolitical landscape of South Asia and beyond. The CPEC guarantees China free access to the warm waters of Indian Ocean at the chokepoints of Strait of Hormuz and Persian Gulf without any interference by the so-called USA and Indian watchdogs. Therefore, India is shouting against Chinese growing influence over 'Indian Ocean'. India is concerned about the likely conversion of Gwadar into permanent Chinese naval base though it is impossible in current perspective. The CPEC has both strategic and economic implications for China and Pakistan because it is clearing the ground for China to access the mighty oil market of Middle East and develop trade relations with East African states.

India is apprehended about this initiative and objected the legal status of CPEC because it passes through the dispute territory of Kashmir. Moreover, the naval deployment of China through Gwadar also poses a threat to India. Although China has claimed that the economic prosperity of China and its neighbouring countries is sole purpose of this project but feasible trepidations by India are still present. Despite acts of consoling to persuade India, the major goals of China by CPEC are to compete India and secure its energy trade from the US and Indian monopoly in Indian Ocean.

Strategic Competition at Gwadar

China has recently emerged as the world largest crude oil importer and surpasses the US in oil import in 2017 ("China Surpasses," 2018). Gulf states are largest oil exporter and Chinese oil watercraft has adopted an alternative route to Malacca strait and that is Gwadar. China was badly dependent on Malacca Strait for its trade as almost 77% of Middle Eastern oil follow this maritime route to reach Chinese ports. Additionally, China's oil trade was vulnerable to blockade and if it ever happened it might have deadly consequences for China (Caesar-Gordon, 2016). Gwadar, in this way, provides a safe trade route to China and abridge Chinese fear of getting trapped in Southeast Asia by India and the US. Regardless of trade security, Gwadar port is one of the most economical ports in the world and the world largest and deepest seaport which will give extreme economic benefits to the region especially China and Pakistan.

Gwadar port is connected to Xinjiang region of China by multibillion road initiative namely China-Pakistan Economic Corridor which will cut down the time, cost, and distance. Ships carrying cargo cover almost 19230 km from Felixstowe, the UK and finally reach Shanghai in 50 days. Whereas the distance remains only 11250 km in 29 days when it comes to Felixstowe, UK and Port Qasim route and cargo can be moved through CPEC connected roads and rail network to reach Khunjerab Pass which takes almost 36 hours, thus reducing 34% distance compared to the previous maritime route (Saeed, 2017). According to the statistics Gwadar Xinjiang trade route will reduce the cost of transporting cargo significantly as the cost from Felixstowe, UK to Shanghai by sea comes to around USD 1192.26/ton and if the sea route taken by Pakistan then same cargo will be minimized to USD 1055.38/ton, indicates the decrease of 12.5% costs over every single tone of cargo over a kilometre transportation (Saeed, 2017).

India has constructed a port (Chabahar) which is just 90 Km away from Gwadar port and closer to oil rich Persian Gulf. The purpose of this port is to detract Afghanistan and Central Asia from Pakistan. Although, the Iranian authorities claim that the port is sister port to Gwadar and they do not want any kind of competition with Gwadar, but the Indian involvement in projection of Chabahar port is major concern for Pakistan (Khetran, 2018). India's postures in international politics are realistic and it follows both defensive and offensive realism approaches against China and Pakistan to project its supremacy and preserve its power (Chandio, 2016).

In an MoU signed between Iran and India on 17 February 2018, India has operational control of the port for 18 months. The Chabahar port is located near the recently discovered Farzad-B gas field and it will liquify the gas and imports it to its western port via Gwadar (R. Khan, 2018). The cooperation between Iran and Pakistan on Chabahar and Gwadar seems to be more difficult as both ports doesnot belong to Pakistan and Iran. Rather the ports were renovated by Chinese and Indian authorities, and they have got these ports on lease.

Another deal by Indian authorities which undermines the Gwadar importance and security is the accession of Duqm port which is located at the southern coasts of Oman. This port is at prime geostrategic location with respect to important energy chokepoints in Indian Oceans which includes Strait of Hormuz, Gulf of Oman, Gulf of Aden and Red Sea. India also gained access to the drydock of Duqm Port through which India can repair its naval and military vessels. In this way, India can freely patrol the Persian Gulf without any botheration of going back to its ports for maintenance and renovation of its ships. India in this way can easily protects its vessels from piracy and keeps a close eye on Pak-China vessels (Hassan, 2018).

Discussion

The peripheral diplomacy is seemed to be an ideal example of mutual trust and economic interdependence. Despite all soft ambitions, China's interests in South Asian region are severely contingent upon the Indo-Pak security dilemma which can exacerbate the security dynamic of China at any stage. Therefore, China has attempted to de-escalate the tension between India and Pakistan and bring economic prosperity in South Asia.

The development of Gwardar-Xinjiang and Kunming-Chittagong trades route, energetic role of mediator in Afghanistan, extension of SCO platform to South Asia and provision of economic incentives to smaller South Asian states are those initiatives which advocate the transparency of peripheral diplomacy. However, results suggested that these kinds of measures would not guarantee the alleviation of persistent Indo-Pak security dilemma. Consequently, peripheral diplomacy is inevitably worsening the security dilemma of Pakistan. The reason for such consequences is that the China is deploying both hard and soft means in South Asia. China has not only consolidated economic ties with South Asian nations but also came as the largest arms exporter to South Asia. Therefore, it can be deduced that China itself is breeding security dilemma in South Asia.

The overall policy of China is Indo-centric. India is undeniably a big power which has, though not equal, strategic parity vis-à-vis China due to its versatile demography, persistent institutionalized democracy and rising economic growth. China is potentially challenging India strategically by giving economic incentives to other South Asian nations. The maritime assertiveness of China by developing ports in India's neighbourhood is one of those factors which enhance the distrust between India and China. By all counts, available data showed that if China will be failed in balancing its hard and soft approaches in South Asia vis-à-vis India, then it will lead to another security dilemma between India and China. The emergence of this kind of security dilemma will not only deteriorate the leading power ambitions of India and China but also worsened the peace in region.

The likely challenges to peripheral diplomacy of China in South Asia are various. The very first challenge is the inborn rivalry of India and Pakistan which is further worsened by the Sino-US competition in South Asia. The continual military support of China to Pakistan and the termination of non-proliferation paradigm by America in India are the two main factors which have aggravated the South Asian security dilemma. Besides having heightened security relations with Pakistan, the major instrument of China in South Asia is preferably economic and diplomatic. Its largescale economic stakes and infrastructural projects are concomitant to regional stability, but these efforts can be jeopardized by the fragile security structure of South Asia. Terrorist outfits in Xinjiang and their teachable links in South Asia can ramify the China's stance. It can be concluded from the above discussion that the peripheral diplomacy of China and security dilemma of South Asia are reciprocally intertwined factors. It is hard to say that peripheral diplomacy of China will mitigate the Indo-Pak security dilemma.

Conclusion

The interest of China in South Asia Showed that this region is going to be the lifeline of Chinese economy. This is the only region which can revolutionize the economy of Southwestern region of China. Despite all conjectures, it was concluded that the peripheral diplomacy of China cannot alleviate the economic problems of South Asia. The enthusiastic activism of China in South Asia is itself malicious because it is further aggravating the security dilemma of South Asia. It directly threatens the Indian hegemony in South Asia and the US hegemony in Asia Pacific which in turn could have dire consequences for the region as well for China. The Afghan conundrum, Indo-US nexus, Indo-Pak rivalry, and other factors suggest that South Asia will be a corridor of instability for China.

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